



Joshua 24:14-24

¹⁴ "Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." ¹⁶ Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods, ¹⁷ for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed. ¹⁸ And the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God." ¹⁹ But Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. ²⁰ If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good." ²¹ And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD." ²² Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." ²³ He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel." ²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey." *ESV*

Please read Joshua 24.

How does God demonstrate His loyalty to His own glory?

God often demonstrates the faithfulness of Himself to accomplish His purposes through providence. The Providence of God is His gift intended for our enjoyment of Him. Notice how many times that God identifies Himself as the rescuer and provider through both natural and extraordinary means in the following verses:

v. 3 I took

v. 4 I gave, I gave

v. 5 I sent, I plagued, I brought you out

v. 6 I brought

v. 7 I did

v. 8 I brought, I gave, I destroyed

v. 10 I would not listen, so I delivered

v. 11. I delivered

v. 12 I sent terror (hornets)

v. 13 I have given

These dramatic and often miraculous works of God demonstrated that there was no obstacle standing in the way of God's purposes and love. In Joshua's last breaths, he took the previously recorded acts and proclaimed them and set forward the application (v. 14). All of this so that they could fear the LORD and serve Him. He showed them the personal nature and personal dealings with God. Joshua brought the record of God's ways near to them to show them the reality of God's interest in them. He was careful to show them the storyline, the narrative, of God's redemption.

God is jealous (see v. 19, same as used in Ex. 20.5, Deut. 5.9 10 commandments), meaning He is intolerant of sharing our love. He does not allow other suiters to approach nor is pleased to have shared affections with the idols of our heart. He has won the place that is to be reserved for Him exclusively. He has left nothing undone to win our heart. He is a perfect suiter, a perfect groom,

a perfect lover. Because of that, He will not overlook our sin.

The ransom of God is His manifestation of His name. The book of Joshua began with the ransom of Rahab (ch. 2) Abraham dwelt on the other side of the river and served other gods until God reached down and interrupted his self-worship, his idolatry and set him and his descendants on a course for rest (24:2). Notice that Esau received the mountains of Seir, but Jacob was sent down to Egypt (v. 4). Esau received the blessings for a while, while Israel received the discipline of being shaped into a God-fearing people in Egypt, in captivity, in slavery. This is even a picture of the world. They live it up now, while Christians suffer.

Ransom, redemption, and the rescue motif is repeated virtually 16 times in this chapter. Israel needs all of these actions accomplished on their behalf. They are a fragile nation unable to break free from oppression and seize hold of the inheritance that God promised to them without God's help.

Serve the Lord, serve other gods, same root word for slavery found in v. 17, "house of bondage." Serve the Lord like you served Pharaoh, only God is a benevolent emperor and "woo-er" of your heart. And instead of building pyramids and an earthly empire, you will serve and be rewarded with Rest in God. You will be satisfied as you serve Him.

The covenant of God is His contract intended to bind the believer to His heart. His promise to...and you will find delight only in Him. Covenant language and themes including the words "choose, choosing, written covenant, redemption, ransom, ownership, Lordship, loyalty" characterize God's approach to His people.

"I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did no build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant." (v. 13)

This is not capitalism! This is pure grace. This is how the Gospel is. We receive the rewards of Christ. We receive Christ's righteousness, His perfect work to satisfy the requirements of the law, His fellowship with the Father, His robes of majesty, His palace, His everlasting Life. They

are all shared with us. We did not work, we did not labor, we could not justify ourselves, we did not satisfy the law, we did not approach God and claim the crown, we did not fight sin, we did not win.

After the people solemnly gave their vows to the Lord, Joshua made a recording of the covenant and took a large stone under the oak by the sanctuary, serving like the stone memorial after crossing Jordan (Joshua 4:1-9). In choosing which gods people will serve, they will choose which gods they will love. The book of Joshua closes inviting us to ask the same questions that Joshua asked of the congregation of Israel:

- Will you serve the gods of your own imagination?
- Will you serve the gods of your own cognition?
- Will you serve the gods that you can manipulate?
- Will you serve the gods that you can bribe?
- Will you serve the gods of your heart, and the influences around you?

In choosing to serve the true God it will be choosing a life of servitude—joyful slavery. No rights. No reprieves. But in this contract that He has with you, it is meant to be a contract born out of love, carried through with love and bringing you to the highest point of human existence: eternal life, satisfying love in Him alone.

The beginning of the book of Joshua revealed that Moses had died. The book ends with Joshua sharing his last words with Israel, words of blessing and a plea to remain faithful to God. How would you respond?

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